

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LOME IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY COTONOU

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 062722

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E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, DM, TO, US

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH EYADEMA

REF:LOME 552

1. DEPT CONCURS THAT YOU SHOULD TAKE OPPORTUNITY OF NEXT MEETING WITH EYADEMA TO EXPLAIN PRESENT STATUS OF US-BENIN RELATIONS. SUGGEST YOU MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS:

--SINCE BENIN/DAHOMEY BECAME MARXIST-LENINIST IN NOVEMBER 1974 USG HAS HAD INCREASING DIFFICULTY IN CONDUCTING BUSINESS WITH GOVERNMENT. LONGSTANDING PROBLEMS INCLUDE NATIONALIZATION OF ASSETS OF AMERICAN FIRMS FOR WHICH NO COMPENSATION PAID (AS OPPOSED TO RELATIVELY PROMPT COMPENSATION PAID BY TOGOLESE IN 1974 CTMB NATIONALIZATION), ATTACKS ON US IN MEDIA AND INTERNATIONAL FORA, NOTICE TO VACATE CHANCERY BY OCTOBER 26, 1976, AND TREATMENT OF
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AMBASSADOR ENGLE BY RANKING MEMBERS OF BENINESE GOVERN-

MENT.

--AMBASSADOR ENGLE LEFT COTONOU FEBRUARY 15 ON CONSULTATIONS FOLLOWING A PARTICULARLY EGREGIOUS BREACH OF DIPLOMATIC CONDUCT BY THE GPRB. SINCE THAT DATE, THERE HAVE BEEN NO SIGNS OF PROGRESS ON THE SEVERAL OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. TO DATE, THE GPRB HAS NOT DEMONSTRATED THAT IT IS PREPARED TO TREAT USG REPRESENTATIVES IN MANNER BEFITTING NATION WITH WHOM WE DESIRE FRIENDLY RELATIONS.

-- USG WISHES TO CONTINUE TO ASSIST BENIN'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, IF COOPERATION IS STILL POSSIBLE WITH GPRB. OUR ASSISTANCE TO BENIN IS MAINLY IN THE FORM OF PROJECTS THAT COULD HAVE SUBSTANTIAL REGIONAL IMPACT. THE NEW BRIDGE OVER THE LAGOON AT COTONOU, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD IMPROVE CIRCULATION OF GOODS AND PEOPLE ALONG THE COAST IN THE BIGHT OF BENIN. THEREFORE, IT IS IN BEST INTERESTS OF PEOPLE OF WHOLE REGION THAT US-BENIN RELATIONS IMPROVE.

2. IF PRESSED FOR COMMENT ON FUTURE OF US-BENIN RELATIONS, YOU SHOULD REPLY THAT ENTIRE RANGE OF PROBLEMS WITH BENIN NOW UNDER REVIEW BY DEPT.

3. DEPT WILL BE INTERESTED IN ANY ASSESSMENT FYADEMA MAY HAVE OF CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN BENIN AND THEIR POSSIBLE RELEVANCE TO EVOLUTION OF US-BENIN RELATIONS DESCRIBED ABOVE. KISSINGER

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